An Essay
on
Lex Therapeutica Magna,
Respectfully submitted
to the
Faculty
of the
Homœopathic
Medical College
of
Pennsylvania,
on the
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Eighteen hundred and fifty nine,
by
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Lex Therapeutica Magna.

In the records of ages, and in the history of nations, perhaps no branch of science has advanced as little as that of medicine. The men of ancient times, wandering as upon an ocean of dark and gloomy prospects, in search of means, by which the great monster pest of mankind might be dispelled, ever and anon found some new vagaries upon which their anxious minds might dwell. They delved deeply into the labyrinths of empiricism, and upon badly based hypotheses, made remedial applications to the destruction

of the life principle. They founded a system upon which succeeding generations might build a more substantial edifice, and confidently trusted, that "time in its unerring flight," would bring in medicine, an era, when disease would no longer bear so deep an impress of dread and dismay. Men of lofty minds lived to honor their age, and genius of intellect shone brightly in literary productions, yet therapeutics was metamorphosed into a condition no better than that which it previously maintained. Theories of conflicting characters found in many able supporters, and intellectual capacity was wasted to a great extent upon those subjects, which could

by no means facilitate the march of medical Science. Upon the darkness of obscurity which then enveloped the medical world, a brighter day dawned. The clouds, which overshadowed the then existing healing art, were dispelled; and the "Lex Therapeutica Magna" came forth in the embodiment of "Similia Similibus curantur". Hahnemann indeed acheived a glorious triumph in the discovery of this great principle, and although assailed by the ridicule and sneers of those devoted to a profession, called Scientific, he persisted in practically applying it, and more fully developed its great truths. Its merits as a fundamental guide in therapeutics, were

fully tested by its discoverer. Hahnemann was desirous of knowing, why Peruvian bark was almost a Specific remedy in Intermittent fever, as stated by Cullen in his Materia medica. His investigating mind led him to ascertain its action upon the healthy organism, and accordingly, he instituted proving upon himself, by taking the drug for several days in succession. The effects, which were produced, were like those symptoms, which characterized the disease which it cured.

In view of the result thus obtained, he experimented with other remedial agents, meeting with the same success, and arriving at the same conclusions concerning drug action. After experi-

menting thus, and comparing the curative properties of remedies with those effects which they produce upon the human economy, he founded his "Similia similibus curantur", as the great keystone of therapeutics, and built upon it a system, which has far superseded that non-progressive system, which characterizes the Allopathic profession. That disease itself is capable of being eradicated by remedial agents producing symptoms, which characterize that disease, is no longer a matter of hypothesis, but stands as a well authenticated principle.

That Aconite causes and cures diseases of an inflammatory char-

acter, that Belladonna causes and cures congestive conditions, that China causes symptoms like, as well as cures Intermittent fever, are facts, which stand far beyond the disputations of an opposing profession. Knowing as we do, that disease is conquered in accordance with this principle, and believing that it neither has been, nor can be dispelled by any other expedient, it seems well that we should have some idea of the manner in which Homeopathic remedies exercise their peculiar action. A force we believe exists in medicants, which acts upon disease, eradicating it, or producing palliative effects.

This force has been styled the dynamic force - the "vis medicatrix" of Homoeopathy. We maintain likewise, that this force is more fully developed by a process of trituration or dilution, which effects a separation of the atoms of the crude material from each other, and renders the drug more capable of producing its characteristic impression upon the diseased organism. Perhaps no theory concerning the action of remedies, assumes a more plausible, aspect than that broached by our worthy teacher - the Professor of Materia-medica; - that the remedial agent administered, has

a greater affinity for the disease, than the organism has, and in consequence, thereby attracts it, ridding the system of those pernicious effects, which the morbific principle or disease produces. To review the various hypotheses concerning drug action, would be a superfluous proceeding in an essay of this character. Suffice it to say that the theory already given, is one, which bears ~~xxxxxxx~~ an appearance of more sound and practical reasoning, than any which has as yet come within the scope of our observation. To assert, that disease is expelled by the substitution of a drug

affection in its place, would call into question, the manner in which this drug affection is to be eradicated. If we, in accepting this, conclude that nature is capable, and exerts her power successfully in the expulsion of the drug disease thus substituted, then with the same arguments, we may attribute to nature, the capability of expelling the primary disease itself, without the interference of remedial agencies. Theories however conflicting, arguments whether substantiating or disproving certain theoretical assumptions, fortunately exercise no ill effects upon the

action of Homœopathic means. To know that our means do act, and that in a satisfactory manner, is sufficient, without idly theorizing, or wasting time in the support or refutation of certain broached speculations. Homœopathic means acting, act gently yet effectually, producing no such debilitating conditions as are produced by the prescriptions of allopathic empirics. In applying the principles of "Similia", we derive not from the system, the very life fluid, we divert not the natural and healthy condition of the bowels, or change the proper function

of the stomach. We administer no remedies producing either, cathardis, emesis, dinesis, diaphoresis, or ptyalism, with the hope of removing disease from the system. On the contrary we endeavor to maintain the healthful action of the different organs, and, direct our means entirely to the diseased tissues, without interfering with those parts remote from them. We do not claim for our law an infallibility, neither do we admit, that in disease, it has any true or positive exceptions. We make no pretentions to act in the expulsion of poisonous agents by

means of Homœopathic remedies, neither do we profess to effect amputations, to perform surgical or mechanical operations, in carrying out the principles of our law. Arguments of such a character, as disputative of our principles, can only be noticed, as emanating from those, whom reason teaches better things, but whose prejudices supersede reason. Sound judgment, cannot for a moment, entertain or tolerate such ideas. Again, the minuteness of our doses has become the most fruitful cause of objection to our profession. But when we call into con-

sideration the fact, that that principle which is productive of disease, exists in the very atmosphere we breathe; that the most celebrated chemists have endeavored to analyse it, but failed so to do; that microscopists have exerted themselves in vain to discover it by means of resources which they possessed, then we may ask,- is it a matter of great astonishment, that our remedial agents should produce an effect upon the diseased organism? No! mystery does not involve the one, if the other be true. Ignorance of the signification of our law, or a base unwillingness to be

convinced by fair means, and a direct test of the sufficiency and efficacy of its applications, call forth from professing fanatics, the unjust imputations cast upon us. On certain occasions, we find our agents represented as non-medicinal; at other times, and by the same persons, they are denounced as highly poisonous, and exceedingly dangerous to life.

This manner of reasoning, and such endeavors to bring us into disrepute, will not bear the slightest touch of scrutiny. "Similia similibus curantur" has been denounced as vague, and as the

result of a wild and extravagant imagination. Be this as it may; it will be well to observe how it corresponds with the deeds of those who assert it. Denounced and disputed as our principles are by Allopathic continists, they are nevertheless indirectly admitted by positive recommendations of treatment in disease. Says Watson in his work on Practice (3rd Am. Ed. Page 349)

"But there is a form of poisoning that may easily be mistaken for tetanus. The symptoms produced by a poisonous dose of strychnia, or its salts, or the vegetables from which it is procured, are the symptoms of tetanus". Subsequently in his treat-

ise upon tetanus, he says—"and in so fatal a malady, it would be justifiable, I conceive, to give the Strychnia, in the hope that it might occasion a morbid action which would supersede the morbid action of the disease, and yet be less perilous and more manageable than it."

The Homœopathicity of Strychnia in tetanus is clearly and openly admitted (Page 358) notwithstanding the general rejection of "Similia".

Mercury is used perhaps more frequently in old school practice than any other remedial agent. It is a favorite remedy in fevers of all kinds, dropsies, constipation, diarrhœa, affections of the

liver, and indeed in almost all diseases, to which the human frame is subject. It is the "ne plus ultra" remedy in syphilis, and receives the plaudits, the high sounding and eloquent declamations of those entirely ignorant of its truely pathogenetic virtues. Denying our law, disavowing any sympathy with its established principles, they modestly confess their inability in a great many instances, to distinguish between the effects of mercurial poisoning, and those arising from the introduction of the syphilitic virus into the system. If a morbid influence is capable of

producing a disease, which is scarcely distinguishable from the effects of a drug, which cures that disease, and in very many instances so equivalent, that it appears almost impossible to discriminate between its effects, and those of the drug, then we may justly ask; whether such a drug in the relation which it sustains to that disease, does not bear a perfect identity to the principle of "similia". If mercury is Homoeopathic to syphilis, then we may be asked - why are not more perfect cures recorded under its action, by Allopathic physicians? We account for its unsuccessful action in their hands, as follows, 1st. The truely

dynamic virtue of the drug is not fully developed in the massive doses which are prescribed — 2nd That where this virtue is so manifested as being capable of eradicating the disease, the excessive action which the mercury has upon those parts but slightly affected by the virus, supersedes the disease, by substituting a drug affection in its place. The works of Allopathic practitioners, are teeming with instances of their adoption of remedies, which are evidently Homœopathic, yet for want of space, we refrain from giving any further examples, and refer our perusers to Hahnemann's

Organon (3rd Am. Ed. Page 59). The rays of true science have produced a mighty influence upon the practices of Allopathic physicians, and the beaming truths of Homeopathy are being reluctantly acknowledged by its evident opponents. We predict for our science, an ultimate triumph over the vagaries of old school dogmatists. With soul-stirring and cheering hopes, we anticipate, - and, at no far distant period - its near approach to a perfectness in its applications, and with confident expectations, we look forward to the era, when the onward marching sun of Homeopathy, will shine resplendent in the zenith of success, and the fading shadow of empiricism, be lost in the night of oblivion.